
Preparation for Investigators Took Months

Employees in the Laboratory-Directed Research and Development (LDRD) office spent an intense three months preparing for a recent visit by staff members of a congressional investigating team.

Members of the House Appropriations Committee had requested an investigation to answer two major questions about LDRD nationwide: 1) Is money from organizations other than the Department of Energy (DOE) being spent wisely by the LDRD programs? 2) Would it be better if Congress had control of the money and DOE headquarters managed the program?

Initially, members of the Appropriations Survey and Investigations Team were expected to visit all of the laboratories in the DOE complex, but eventually, they settled on six. Los Alamos National Laboratory, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, and Sandia National Laboratories were among them.

LANL had about two months of advance notice that two staff members from the team would be visiting.

The DOE established an office for the team in the Forrestal Building in Washington, D.C., and the investigators began asking questions.

Rita Spencer of LANL's LDRD office said that past scrutiny proved to be a blessing in disguise for the program at LANL. "Actually," she said, "we've been preparing for years," because the program here "is under constant scrutiny from Congress." Past records and databases were available and well organized, "a testimony to good document management," she said.

The questions researched in Los Alamos included such things as how much money had been spent on projects of certain types since 1995 and how many projects had been rejected by the DOE since 1992. The questions were very

detailed, and they were often in unpredictable areas, Spencer said, but despite "very short turn around," LANL LDRD was able to pull up the appropriate information "very quickly." The local LDRD staff worked with equivalent employees at other laboratories to develop general answers. "The labs don't compete in the LDRD program," Spencer said. "They work together."

As the day of the visit approached, Los Alamos LDRD collected information on the investigating team's visits to DOE-Albuquerque and to other laboratories. LDRD Program Manager David Watkins reviewed the work of his staff—Spencer, Howard Hanson, Lennett Rendon, Joann Lucero, Lori Abney, and Claire Mizne—and prepared viewgraphs on areas of concern including the value of LDRD as a laboratory-directed program.

(Continued on Back)

Schultz Has Many Interests

When Stephen Schultz moved to New Mexico recently and became a web designer/programmer in STB, he was making a huge change in his life—but it wasn't the first time.

Schultz, a native of Wisconsin, earned a bachelor's degree in physics from Notre Dame and went on to earn a master's degree in physics from the University of California-Berkeley. But then he switched fields and earned master's and doctoral degrees in psychology from Berkeley.

He lived in California for 30 years, and for 25 of those years, he was a practicing psychologist. In a recent interview, he said he liked doing psychotherapy, but he gradually grew frustrated with the managed-care environment.

In 1985, he visited Santa Fe, he said, "and I fell in love with the place." He kept coming back to visit, and finally, he moved to the "City Different." In November, he came to work at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

"I've come full circle, in a way," he said, recalling that the summer before his senior year in college, he worked at Lawrence Radiation Laboratory at Berkeley.

And computers? "I've always played with computers," he said. "It just took me a long time to figure out how to make any money doing it." He did his first website in 1996 to showcase his art work. Over the years, he has worked in ceramics, metal sculpture, and watercolors.

(Continued on Back)

Rita Spencer Is Retiring

Rita Spencer said she was looking forward to a long list of interesting activities as her last day in Laboratory-Directed Research and Development (LDRD) approached.

She said she hoped for a reduction in stress and an improvement in health, but she admitted that her last day at work May 28 might be a little sad. "I really love this job," she said in an interview on May 16.

Spencer joined the Laboratory in December 1991. She worked first in M Division (which became DX); moved to the Laboratory Policy Office (which became QP and

(Continued on Back)

Notes from Allen Hartford

There have been rumors for some time that the Laboratory might put a day-care center in Canyon School. We can now say with certainty that that will *not* happen.

Los Alamos Schools Superintendent Jim Anderson confirmed in a recent telephone conversation that the Laboratory will use the Pajarito School site instead. The pressure is off—at least with respect to Canyon.

Anderson said that the Laboratory did suggest putting a day-care center in a portable building at Canyon, but the school system rejected the idea. School officials felt that portables tend to become permanent.

On May 13, Anderson said, the School Board made its decision and gave him permission to negotiate an agreement for the Pajarito site. The day-care center there will probably be running in January. Meanwhile, Anderson said, the Laboratory has said it wants to exercise its option to extend the current Canyon lease from 2005 to 2010.

Preparation (continued)

When the investigators arrived, they asked to meet with selected principal investigators. They also met with some principal investigators whom the local LDRD program selected. LANL Deputy Director for National Security John Immele spoke during the meeting, explaining the importance of the program to LANL.

The Los Alamos LDRD employees felt that their months of work had produced a good presentation. Spencer said, “David did a tremendous job.” And, Spencer said, the visitors seemed to be impressed too.

The local staff may never know, however, exactly what they achieved. There is no requirement for a public report of any kind from the investigation. A report will go, instead, to the chairman of the Appropriations Committee.

Schultz (continued)

He is now a printmaker. Drop by his office, and you will see, hanging on his wall, a large print he did in muted southwestern colors that evokes the pictographs in Anasazi ruins.

Schultz is enjoying his new life. He’s using cutting-edge technology at the Laboratory; he has a home in Santa Fe; he has started skiing again after many years away from the sport; and he has gone on several professionally led Crow Canyon expeditions (based in Durango, Colorado), visiting a number of Anasazi ruins. He hopes to camp in Chaco Canyon next.

One thing that he enjoyed during his career in psychology was teaching graduate students. And now, in STB, he is planning to mentor a student this summer.

He’s become a New Mexican, and it’s all coming together.

(Editor’s Note: We also have a new webmeister at the Research Library—Joe Liberty. In June, we’ll introduce you to him.)

Spencer (continued)

then QIO); worked in policy and then shifted to planning; and moved with her group when it became part of STB. She spent six years in STB-Planning, putting out the Institutional Plan each year, then moved to LDRD, where she worked on four Annual Progress Reports.

Looking back, she said she moved to LDRD because she wanted a challenge and “wanted to learn more physics, chemistry, etc.” When she moved from STB-Planning to LDRD, she took with her an extensive knowledge of the Department of Energy and significant process development and editing skills. But she also brought knowledge from another life that might come as a surprise to some of her STB colleagues.

Spencer grew up in England. She earned a bachelor’s degree in mathematics, English language and literature, and modern educational history from Oxford. “I like reading documents that other people find very boring,” she said with a grin. She also studied child development, music, and curriculum design at the Lady Spencer-Churchill College of Education.

She worked as a teacher, and she was even inducted into the British Society for Women in Technology because she introduced science and technology programs in three school districts.

She married an American, Kenneth Spencer (now an electrical engineer in NIS-4), and moved to the United States, where she became a citizen in 1980. She and her husband have four grown children and four grandchildren.

What’s next? She wants to write—both poetry and books on history. She wants to do “lots of genealogy, (and) family history writing” and associated photography. She is planning to design web pages. She wants to practice on the new piano she got two years ago and on the cello her husband bought her for their 30th wedding anniversary. She wants to plant flowers and bake (especially wedding cakes), and do needlework such as lace-making, knitting, tatting, and crocheting.

But most of all, she wants to spend lots of time with her grandchildren—the one in Los Alamos, *and* those now living in New York State and in Oregon. She’ll have a financial edge in all this traveling. Her son Michael is a pilot, and she can fly free.